

Venice Gaylor

Tape 185

Interviewed on April 20, 1987

Transcribed by Lori G. Robinson, September 2001

The following is an interview conducted by a LaPoint sixth grader. Venice Gaylor is being interviewed about early school days. (The interviewer is unnamed and will be identified as 'I'.)

I:....school project, for History. Today is April 20, 1987.

Describe what your school looked like as a child.

Venice Gaylor (Venice): I went to several elementary schools as a child, but the two I remember best are Sharon and Timpanogas. Sharon was in Orem. It was torn down years ago, though. It was a tan brick one-story building, and it had at least seven rooms and a long, wide hall. I remember a boys' and girls' lavatory also. The library was a closet-type room at the end of my second grade classroom, and it had books on high shelves on both sides. We used a step ladder to get up to the books. The reason I remember this so clearly is because I was librarian, that year, for my class. Also, the upper grade kids were always walking in and out of our room to get a library book. I don't know where school lunch was prepared, but it was delivered on trays to each classroom, and that's where we ate it.

The Timpanogas school is a two-story red brick building that still stands in Provo. The stairs inside were wide and roomy. The fourth grade classroom was upstairs. I know that there were at least two classrooms for each grade level because my friends and I were separated. In all the schools I attended, the rows of desks were always the same way, desk behind desk, with a long way between rows. The teacher's desk was up in front, facing the class, and, always, one big blackboard across the front wall.

I: Okay. What games did you play at recess?

Venice: Recess games were varied with the grade level, of course. We played jacks and jump rope. We had to have our own jump ropes, though. We played Red Rover or just walked around arm-in-arm at recess. I don't remember ever playing baseball, though I think some of the boys did.

I: Okay. Describe what it was like to go to school in the winter.

Venice: I always walked to school because I lived fairly close to school. There were always sidewalks, and we walked across aisle[??] and a cross guard. If there was ever a lot of traffic, we had to cross at a special intersection where there was a light and a cross guard.

I: How did you celebrate holidays in school?

Venice: Holidays at school, when I was a kid, were always recognized by the singing, the pictures, and the stories we worked with. Only once was I ever in a school play, and at that time, I was a pumpkin pie. This was done at Timpanogas School, and there was a gym there that we used the stage on.

I: What did you do to occupy your time when you weren't in school?

Venice: When I was not in school, I mostly just read books. When our family went on trips, I still took my books with me. Since no one had TVs, the evenings were a lot of fun with the neighbor kids, and we played games like run-sheepy-run.

Also, we played paper dolls. We had shoe boxes for them, and it was a lot of fun. It seemed like all the paper dolls were movie star paper dolls, and we tried to see who could collect the most of them.

Another thing we did was play with rock houses. We'd just take big cobblestone rocks and outline houses, and every one would live in their own house with one or two rooms. This playing house could go on for days and days.

I: What were the main subjects in school, and how have they changed?

Venice: I don't think the main subjects in school have changed. The format may be different because of the needs of the students now, but the criteria is still the same: math, reading, writing, and spelling, history and geography, and science. Whereas, everything was presented from the teacher's textbook in those days, now we have so many different teaching tools, such as the TV that brings our science, history, and geography to life.

My students, in the classrooms I taught, learned about weather right directly from a film that we showed. And also in kindergarten, they do the same things. Field trips are now a big thing. We take our kids right to the historical museums to see the artifacts. Science fairs let them share their inventions with other students, and computers give a special learning experience to everyone on a one-to-one basis. In the three schools I have taught in, all these tools were available. I would say that the main subjects have not changed, but have been expanded on so that students receive more varied experience in every subject.

I: How has discipline changed in the classroom?

Venice: Discipline has gone through a big change since elementary school, when I was a child. Instead of harsh reprimand for misbehaving, positive reinforcement has seemed to take the place. Behavior in the classroom is now mostly controlled by an award or reward system for good behavior. A lot of praise and encouragement to every child helps to guide them in the right direction. For misbehavior, 'time-out' seems to be the thing, or just knowing they won't hear, 'good job' usually works.

I: How did you get to school and back?

Venice: I'm sure there were buses for some of the students, but I always lived close enough to a

school to walk to and from.

I: Okay. Describe the school furniture.

Venice: Each child had their own desk and chair. The teacher's desk was big. The only other furniture was a piano, usually one for the whole school. That's about the way it was.

I: How do you think school will change in the future?

Venice: Changes for the future have already begun. Most schools now have a TV. and VCR for every classroom. Media centers hold thousands and thousands of books. It just seems everything is right there at their fingertips.